438 the gold. But they, in turn, could in no case resell the gold to any-
643 body other than the Fama. Aside from certain sacrificial uses and the
[648] making of jewels for the Fama's wives, gold served to ransom cap-
tives or to negotiate royal alliances.

435 The price of the commodities was set by agreement between buyer and seller, except for cloth which had a fixed price, 100 cowrie shells per cubit in the Bamako region. As a matter of fact, the cot-
[286] ton gathered in the fields of the community was woven by captives who were not paid.

426 Loans were made without interest. Interest, korko, is still
686 forbidden today. Loans are guaranteed by labor. The debtor who could not repay his debt on time and whose family head refused to pay it for him was seized by the Fama and held as security until such time as he had reimbursed his debt.

804 Side by side with French units of measurement, the natives use their own for trade. Their measures of length: the cubit (elbow to tip of middle finger), the span, the foot, the length of both arms extended, the pace, the diare, and the kala . . .; their measures of capacity: the sawel or mouré, the mud; their weights: the moutkhal, the catal, the large and little karoni, the wakie, the pellet of tali, of tomi, of bagana, of gelen. Cotton is weighed on rough scales whose pointer is a wooden rod and the balances large gourds hung by strings. For weights, large rocks, kulu, from 800 to 1,200 grams are
[436] used. Finally, the Bambara use French money almost exclusively: one franc of metropolitan France is equivalent to 0.50 francs C.F.A. Nevertheless, the use of cowrie shells is still frequent.

d. Banks

453 One bank of issue exists in French West Africa: the Bank of French West Africa. There are also private banks, the number of which has increased during the past few years.

The Bank of French West Africa, which has a branch at Bamako, carries out the following operations: [43]

1. discounts notes or bills of two or several signatures due in not more than 180 days;

2. creates, negotiates, or buys drafts;

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage. This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad
[582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

608 his ally had to try to ransom him. A sénanku often serves as inter-
621 mediary in arranging marriages, in land claims, in the collection of
648 debts. He is rewarded by gifts. He has the power to stop quarrels and to oppose acts of rage and violence by the man whose sénanku he is, no matter what his rank and no matter how important the decisions in question are. The sénanku of a Fama could prevent his declaring war or condemning to death one of his subjects. Moreover, he has certain limited privileges over his ally's possessions. (He may appropriate unimportant objects, food, and even sums of money.) Finally, he recruits the labor force which his ally may need.

c. Age Classes. -- But though these different ties exercise an
621 important influence on the political, social, and religious life of the
571 community they are generally too broad and too lax to permit organiza-
561 tion of a work community. In fact, we have seen how a large village may be formed of different communities relatively independent of each other, despite the authority of the founding community's fa. On the level of the canton, the geographical dispersion does not permit the Fama to intervene personally in the organization of the work community. The latter is founded essentially on the system of relations of the age classes.

561 From infancy until circumcision for the boys, until excision for the girls, the young Bambara belongs to a hierarchic society which prepares him or her for this ceremony and which provides an education complementary to that received in the family. Within this association all the children are divided into age classes: boys up to six years of age are bilakoro-dogomani (bila = short pants), from 6 to 10 years they are bilakoro-dogo[illegible] from 10 to about 15 years, bilakoro-koroba. Similarly, the girls are, successively: sunkiri-dogomani, sunkuru-dogoma, and sunkuru-koroba. Each age class has a chief: ton-tigi for the boys, musso-tigi for the girls; each office is doubled by a deputy (syere). There is also a treasurer and a ton-dyeli who is the griot of the ton. All are elected by members of the society. A Bambara will be influenced all his life by his membership in a certain age class which groups all the children who underwent circumcision at the same time. In fact, up to the moment of circumcision the child's personality is not yet distinct. We have seen before how small children were

[76] II. Present Evolution of Bambara Society

A. Political Evolution

648 636 At the present time, all the territory of the Sudan is unified and endowed with a political organization permitting it to play an active role within the framework of the French Union. The Sudan, like each of the eight territories of French West Africa, is represented in the National Assembly, in the Senate [Conseil de la République], and in the Assembly of the French Union by elected members. These members have been chosen from among the sons of former slaves or people of caste as well as from among the sons of former chiefs.

The administrative organization is placed under the authority of a governor general, seconded by two councils: the High Council of West Africa and the Government Council. At the head of the territory is a governor who is the administrative chief of the territory; he is assisted by a secretary general, named, like the governor, by decree, and by a civil and military cabinet which transmits the governor's orders.

Finally, the circles are directed by colonial administrators directly responsible to the governor. The circles are divided into subdivisions headed by assistant administrators who are directly responsible to the circle administrators. They are charged with the general administration and control of all the civil and financial functions of the circle.

Each circle is divided into cantons based on the territorial divisions of the old military districts. A canton has a head sometimes named by the administration but generally elected according to the traditional custom of the old Fama. The canton head is charged with representing the interests of the natives before the administration.

B. Tendency to Economic Change

177 The principal transformation in the Bambara economy stems from the French pacification and from the contributions of the European social and economic organization.

791 people in their hands; it is they who guide them and force them into obedience by predicting that those who resist will be afflicted with sickness, all kinds of calamities, and death. They are capable of all sorts of actions to preserve their prestige. They compound love philters, talismans, amulets, etc., but they are even better at com-
[278] pounding poisons: they are familiar with Strophanthus and their mixtures of hyena intestines, excrements of human corpses, and saliva taken from their mouths have terrible effects.

791 These makers of rain and fair weather, who predict the future,
cast lots, and cure the sick are all jealous of one another; there is
● 648 no unity among them, and since cowardice is each one's chief virtue, there is no fear for the moment that they will press toward revolt. However, one should have no illusions, for that good-fellow smile on the lips of the Bambara in no way gives a true picture of their feelings. They hate the French because they are conquerors, and especially because the French have forbidden them to take slaves, sell, or even own them, and because they cannot administer justice as they please. The elders, who were formerly so powerful, feel their authority decreasing little by little, and there is fury in their hearts. They tremble and are afraid, they dread our rifles and cannons, whose rumblings still ring in their ears; they believe France to be even greater and more powerful than she is. But if some day a bold, enterprising, and audacious sorcerer should appear, he would succeed in creating a temporary union between these divergent groups no matter how slight a control he achieves. Then, without any doubt, we would see partial uprisings like those so frequent among the Moslems. The latter have deep in their hearts a hatred of everything that is not Islam and are never so happy as when they can march behind a fanatical Marabout; certain Frenchmen, well intentioned I like to believe, who refuse to admit thousands upon thousands of conclusive facts, continue nevertheless to help and pamper them, because they do not know the Koran and its teachings. Urged by I know not what naive philanthropy, they warm a snake which will turn against us every time it feels strong enough /37/ to raise its head, and they are preparing bloody days for our colonies in the fairly near future.